



News

of the Iowa Mission District
of the North American Lutheran Church

www.iowamissiondistrict.com

October 2018

A Word from the Dean

FREEDOM IN TRUTH

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” - John 8:31-32

Reformation day is October 31. Reformation Sunday is October 28. We celebrate these days by remembering the heritage passed on to us by those faithful servants who have gone before us. Yet our celebration is meaningless unless we, too, dedicate ourselves to carrying on the reformation in our own day.

Luther and the Reformers sought to call the church back to the true and faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The heart of this Gospel is the good news that we are justified before God by grace – a free gift – received in faith. There is nothing we must do to please God, but we are freed to do all things in thankfulness for His gracious love to us. This is the true freedom we are given in Christ Jesus.

In Luther’s day, this word of freedom was obscured by all of the rules and rituals of the church that made it appear we needed to earn God’s favor by our own strength and goodness.

In our day, this word of freedom is often obscured by the failure to take sin seriously. We are encouraged to believe that whatever we desire must be good for us and certainly God would not want to deny us in any way. Yet pretending that our sin is not sinful does not make it go away, it only blinds us to its destructive power in our lives. Rather than receiving the freedom that comes from God’s word of forgiveness, then, we hear, instead, a word of permission that encourages us to remain in slavery to sin.

The Gospel of Christ Jesus calls us to acknowledge our sin in order to be freed from it. The Gospel of Christ Jesus is a word of forgiveness – a word of freedom. The wonder is that this forgiveness is given to us as a gift – a word of freedom, freely given without conditions or strings attached, simply offered out of the great love God has for each one of us. May we hear and proclaim this word of freedom and walk in the joy that it brings to our lives!

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean, Iowa Mission District, NALC

[Included on the next page is a copy of the Adoption Agreement for congregations that would like to help support Pastor James Puotyual in his work with the South Sudan Lutheran Church in Ethiopia. We had a chance to hear Pastor Puotyual at both the NALC Convocation and our own Iowa Mission District Convocation. This is the opportunity to add our gifts to our prayers for his mission work among the Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. This agreement can also be accessed on the NALC website. Just go to the “Mission Driven” link and click on “International Mission”. He is the newest one added to the list.]

Official Adoption Agreement

For the Direct Support of:

Pastor James Puotyual South Sudan



Pastor James Puotyual was born in the Upper Nile region of South Sudan. In 1985, due to civil war, he was forced to move to Ethiopia and Kenya, living for a few years in tents in United Nations refugee camps. While in the refugee camps, Pr. James married his wife, Nyandit Rika in 1987, after which a daughter was born and then died from malaria in 1990. In 1994, he along with his wife Nyandit and son, Jal, came to the United States. Once in the U.S., Pr. James worked at every opportunity to receive an education. James was ordained in 2015. He and Nyandit have two grown children, Jal Doboal and Nyalat Doboal. Today, because of continual civil wars in Sudan, there are over 500,000 refugees living near Gambella, Ethiopia. There is a constant need to show Christ's love to these refugees. Pr. James is being sent to Gambella to serve that need. The primary work for Pr. James will be to provide sacramental worship and spiritual care for the Sudanese living in refugee camps in Ethiopia. He will work in partnership with the Lutheran Church of South Sudan and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY).

For more information, please visit the Lutheran Church of South Sudan's website: <http://www.lutherancss.org> or contact Pastor James at: jamespuot202@yahoo.com or Pastor Tim Lundeen at: prtim@gvtel.com

Amount of support Pledged from our Family or Organization:

\$ _____

Our Gift will be sent: () Once with this agreement () At the end of one year

() Semi-Annually () Quarterly () Monthly

Congregation or Individual's Name

Address/ City/State/Zip

Email Address

Signature and Date



Great Commission Society of the NALC Instructions for Official Adoption Agreement:

□ Please print three copies of this agreement and retain the first for your records

□ Please send the second copy and funds to:

Lutheran Church of South Sudan
c/o Lutheran Church of the Master
2617 S 114th St
Omaha, NE 68144

(Note in Memo Line – Pastor James Puotyual, Global Worker)

□ Please send the third copy to:
North American Lutheran Church
Mission Office
2299 Palmer Drive
New Brighton, MN 55112

Should you have any questions, please contact Jenny Brockman in the Missions Office at: 888-551-7254 or jbrockman@thenalc.org



Sola Scriptura—Scripture Alone Which Is to Be Master?

Pr. Kim Thacker

St. John Lutheran Church, Western Douglas
Plainfield, Iowa

In the book, *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice and Humpty Dumpty had a conversation. In the original nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty only falls. He doesn't speak, so he reveals nothing of his own character. In *Through the Looking Glass* Humpty Dumpty was a speaker, and he was a character, a sinister character. Alice discovered how sinister Humpty Dumpty was from how he was using words, in particular the word, glory.

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't – till I tell

you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather a scornful tone,

"it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master – that's all."

Who should be in control of the meanings of words? Who should be in control of the truth? Which is to be master? This is the issue with regard to the authority of Scripture. When Scripture is the sole authority, then we are letting God be in control. When Scripture is not the sole authority, then man has become the master.

Which *is* to be master? "...we take every thought captive to obey Christ," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. This is the Christian's answer to the question, Which is to be master? "We take *every* thought," he said. All of our

thoughts need to be replaced by the Word of God. Martin Luther explained this while commenting on one of the beatitudes:

Then what is a pure heart? In what does it consist? The answer can be given quickly, and you do not have to climb up to heaven or run to a monastery for it and establish it with your own ideas. You should be on your guard against any ideas that you call your own, as if they were just so much mud and filth.

And you should realize that when a monk in the monastery is sitting in deepest contemplation, excluding the world from his heart altogether, and thinking about the Lord God the way he himself paints and imagines Him, he is actually sitting –

if you will pardon the expression – in the dung, not up to his knees but up to his ears. For he is proceeding on his own ideas without the Word of God; and that is sheer deception and delusion, as Scripture testifies everywhere.

What is meant by a "pure heart" is this: one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing its own ideas with the Word of God. This alone is pure before God, yes, purity itself, which purifies everything that it includes and touches.

Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There (1871), by Charles Dodgson, also known as Lewis Carroll, chapter 6

Luther's Works, the American Edition, vol. 21, *Lectures on the Sermon on the Mount* (c. 1530), pp. 33-34.



During the convocation we elected a new treasurer, Pastor Gary Burkhalter. Offerings are now to be sent to him at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076**. New Council members are Pastors Jason Cooper and Christopher Marin, for the clergy members and Mrs. Kathy Scharnhorst and Mr. Mark Richards for the lay members. Thanks to all who share their time and talents in service to our mission district!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2018 Upcoming Events

October 20—Mission District Council meeting, 9:30 am, Mason City.

August 5-9, 2019—Luther Week, Indianapolis, IN. (Note: **Election of Bishop!**)

September 21, 2019—Iowa Mission District convocation, First Lutheran, Manchester, IA.

Donations and Correspondence

Checks sent to the Mission District for support should be made out to the *Iowa Mission District, NALC*, and mailed to Pastor Gary Burkhalter at **312 E Mission St, Strawberry Point, IA 52076**.

Correspondence for Mr. Craig Lease, Mission District Secretary, should be sent to **405 7th St. N., Northwood, IA 50459**

Items for the Mission District newsletter (pictures, news, etc.) are best sent via e-mail to Pastor Barbara Wills at barbaramwills@gmail.com.

The Iowa Mission District website may be found at: www.iowamissiondistrict.com. If your congregation has a web site, and you would like to have the web address linked to your church name on the Mission District web site, please send the web address to me, Pastor Barbara Wills, at barbaramwills@gmail.com.



Following Jesus—Luther Style

What God Has First Given Us

In the offertory prayer on page 67 of the Lutheran Book of Worship, we pray: *Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*”

Is this true? Do we actually pray this or simply say the words? Do we really offer our whole selves to the Lord? Do we give? Do we give of our possessions? And our time? Or do we begrudge the time spent in worship, perhaps watching the clock and timing the sermon? Do we acknowledge that we are God’s children and subject to Him—that we owe Him our very lives, both physically and spiritually? Do we understand that all we have really belongs to the Lord? And do we ever contemplate what Christ has done for us and what it cost Him, the very Son of God, to humble Himself and come down into the filth of human sin and take it upon His most holy, pure self?

These are tough questions, but they are central to our faithful following of Christ Jesus. Too often we want the “benefits” (as we understand them) of being “Christians”, but we don’t want the responsibilities. We say we want to be with the Lord in the hereafter—but in the here and now? Well, we do have busy lives, and we have people to see and places to go, and way too many things we want to do and buy—thus we seek to justify negligence and indifference.

In the world we tend to compartmentalize different aspects of our lives—work, school, family, church, recreation, ad infinitum. In our faith walk, we too often try to do the same. We talk of stewardship as if it were separate from evangelism or worship or showing compassion or repenting. There are committees for worship, evangelism, stewardship, missions, education—all pursuing separate goals and seeming to compete for time and resources. But these are all part of the same thing—all part of our faithful following of Christ. And all must be integrated within our hearts.

The bottom line is laid out pretty clearly by our Lord in John 15: *“I am the vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may*

bear more fruit.... I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing....By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love.” (vss. 1-2, 5, 9) Our lives in Christ are not mechanical, they’re organic. The way we live in obedience is not a “to-do”—or “don’t do”—list. The fruit is always a giving of our whole selves to the Lord—sometimes materially, sometimes through our abilities and knowledge—sometimes just “taking time” for the Lord in prayer and worship or for others in patience and service.

In Christ, we are loved into a relationship of love—into the very heart of God. It’s just not possible to be caught up in that love and disregard compassion for others, or ignore the reality that we can never measure up and must continually repent of the many ways we fall short. Giving/receiving; forgiving/being forgiven; worshiping/serving; listening/speaking. It’s all done out of love and under the guidance of the Lord who shares His very being with us in His death and resurrection, in His Body and Blood, in His mercy and grace. But this happens only when we are attached to the true Vine, integrated into the Body of Christ (made visible in the Church), and lived out in our day-to-day lives and activities!

We are unable to love perfectly, to give perfectly, to offer ourselves perfectly to the Lord. Sin still happens. With the Apostle Paul we also lament, *“Wretched men and women that we are, who will deliver us from this body of death?”* (Romans 7:24) The answer rings out through the ages, *“Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* (v. 25a) Beloved of the Lord, through our repentance and the forgiveness we receive, we may indeed prayerfully offer with joy and thanksgiving all that the Lord has given us: our whole selves, including our time and those material gifts the Lord has entrusted to us.

Pastor Barbara M. Wills

Congregations of the Iowa Mission District

Ackley: **Our Saviour's**, Dan Buhs, Lay Minister
+Atlantic: **Holy Trinity**—Call Process
Avoca: **Trinity**, Pr. Eric Meissner
Badger: **Badger Lutheran**, Pr. Scott Meier
Boyden: **St. John**, Pr. Mark Lund
Dorchester: **Waterloo Ridge**, Call Process
Eagle Grove: **Evangelical Lutheran**, Pr. Jason Cooper
Eagle Grove: **Samuel Lutheran**, Pr. Rich Taylor
Ellsworth: **Trinity**, Pastor Jon Rollefson
Emmons, MN: **Emmons**, Pr. David Schafer, Interim
Gilmore City: **First**, Tracy Nerem, Lay Minister
Grafton: **Emmanuel**, Pr. Solveig Zamzow
Greene: **St. John (Vilmar)**, Pr. Christopher Martin
Gunder: **Marion**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Harlan: **Bethlehem**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
+Huxley: **Shepherd of the Prairie**, Scott Licht, Lay Minister
Irwin: **St. Paul**, Pr. Ronald Rasmussen
Laurens: **Bethany**, Call Process
Manchester: **First**, Pr. Tony D. Ede
+Monona, **Faith**: Pr. Mel Harris
+Northwood: **Peace**, Pr. Barbara Wills
Palmer: **St. John's**,

Plainfield: **St. John**, Pr. Kim Thacker
Readlyn: **St. Matthew**, Pr. Jean Rabary
Readlyn: **Zion**, Pr. Jean Rabary
+Robins: **Servants of Christ**, Pr. Ron Voss
+Rochester, MN: **Emmanuel**, Pr. David Steffenson
Ruthven: **Zion**, Pr. Thomas Summerfield
St. Ansgar: **First**, Pr. Christopher Staley
St. Olaf: **Norway**, Pr. Marshall Hahn
Sheldon: **St. Paul**, Pr. Craig Nissen
+Sibley: **Faith**, Pr. Tim Nappe
Spencer: **Trinity**
+Strawberry Pt.: **Mission in Christ**, Pr. Gary Burkhalter
Thor: **Ullensvang**, Pr. Darryl Landsverk
Waterville: **Old East Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball
Waukon: **Old West Paint Creek**, Pr. Ken Kimball

+ indicates mission congregation

*The Iowa Mission District
has 37 congregations!*

The following pastors are available for pulpit supply:

Pastor Paul Breddin—515--528-2284
Pastor James Glesne—563-380-8110
Pastor David Steffenson—253-302-9845 (Sundays)
Pastor Paul Weeg- -641-381-0675



Iowa Mission District Leadership

Pastor Marshall Hahn, Dean—stolafparish@netel.net
Craig Lease, Secretary—pdlease@gmail.com
Pastor Burkhalter, Treasurer—pgburkhalter52@hotmail.com

Mission District Council Members:

Pastor Jason Cooper—cooper_jd@yahoo.com
Pastor Mark Lund—pastormarklund@gmail.com
Pastor Christopher Martin—pastorcwmartin@gmail.com
Gregory Olson—golson@ruthventel.com
Chris Schlee—schleemasonry@hotmail.com
Mark Richards—youthdir@gmail.com
Kathy Scharnhorst—gaf@butler-bremer.com

Mission District Communicator (newsletter editor/web master):
Pastor Barbara Wills—barbaramwills@gmail.com